



VIP TFR

By: Mike Quinn, Aviation Support Officer

The common Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) found in Montana usually entails a cylinder of airspace ten miles in radius stretching up to 12,000 feet over a forest fire in Middle-Of-Nowhere, Montana. Most general aviation aircraft end up sidestepping these, with many even flying over the top of them. Should you “accidentally” venture into one of these, your greatest danger would be avoiding the fire suppression planes, with the most likely outcome being nothing more than a verbal rebuke over the radios. At most, they could probably be called “inconvenient”.

However, on February 3, 2005 a massive, two-layered behemoth appeared in the heart of our state: a VIP TFR (and not just any VIP TFR – a *Presidential* TFR). At the least, I would sum it up as “intimidating”. The outer layer had a 30 nm radius, stretched up to 18,000 feet, and was centered over a large city and busy airport: Great Falls. Within this lay a second cylinder with a 10 nm radius, also stretching up to FL180. Sidestepping this 60-mile wide cylinder would be like sidestepping Rhode Island, and we all know that the “GA” realm does not really include the flight levels. You do not go over or around this TFR – you avoid it completely. “Accidentally” straying into the outer airspace is a sure-fire way (pun intended) to see a few F-16’s up close, with the outcome possibly resulting in you finding yourself on an extended vacation in sunny Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Somehow achieving penetration of the inner airspace would probably result in you finding yourself dead. Like I said: intimidating. Nevertheless, I was fortunate enough to have business that took me to the very heart of the VIP TFR. Here, then, are the highlights thereof.

We departed Helena an hour and a half before the TFR was to come into effect, with almost 3/5 of the trip being covered by the TFR. There is no radar coverage in Helena due to terrain, yet before we were 500 feet off the ground, the transponder light illuminated and stayed on.

“We’re being painted,” my captain said.

“What?” I replied in confusion.

“The transponder light only comes on when you are being scanned by radar. It’s on full-bore right now. We’re being painted by radar – probably an AWACS.”

I never knew that about the transponder light (I figured it flashed intermittently to let you know it was working), and we both spent the next five minutes looking up to try to catch a glimpse of the famed radar platform. No such luck, but it was unsettling to know that you were being watched with maximum suspicion. We landed twenty minutes later at Great Falls International without further incident.

Roadblocks were already in effect around the airport when we arrived, with “serious business only” traffic being allowed in. Secret Service suburbans and pick-ups prowled the taxiways while a Highway Patrol helicopter orbited the field like a paranoid, angry wasp. An hour before the expected arrival (no solid time was given for obvious reasons), two F-16’s taxied to the runway. Since there is a Wing stationed there, the sight drew no second glances by most. But suddenly my eyes were drawn to the white tips on the missiles hanging from the wings: war shots. I had never seen them on the planes at GTF, making a shroud of anxiety fall



Administrator's Column

Passenger statistics: Almost 3 million passengers arrived and/or departed Montana commercial service airports in 2004. This figure represents close to 7% more passengers than those carried statewide in 2003. What a great year for Montana airports – thanks to all of those that contribute to the safe, steady operations of the airlines serving Montana. The Aeronautics Division compiles monthly boarding statistics for the 14 commercial service airports in the state. These stats are available on the division's website at: www.mdt.state.mt.us/aeronautics/ ✈

Montana Air Service: Opportunities and Challenges: The air service technical panel met recently with Pam Keidel, Wilbur Smith Associates who will serve as Project Manager for the study together with her team from Morrison-Maierle, Inc. and Louis Berger Group. The group outlined its plan for the project, timeline, answered questions and enjoyed dialogue with the panel. Many of you will be contacted by the team for participation in the project. The usefulness of the study will benefit with input and comments from each of you, so please accommodate as your schedule allows. In addition, a short discussion will be held during the Montana Airport Managers Association annual business meeting at the aviation conference on Thursday, March 3 at 3:00 pm. ✈

Age 60 Rule: Senator James Inhofe, joined by Senator Conrad Burns and Senator Ted Stevens and Congressman James Gibbons have introduced companion legislation in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives that would raise the FAA's mandatory retirement age for commercial pilots from age 60 to age 65. Today's FAA regulations require pilots flying for Part 121 air carriers to retire when reaching the age of 60. Part 135 air carriers do not have a similar mandate. Previous attempts to increase the retirement age have failed in Congress. The bill numbers are S. 65 and H.R. 65. ✈

New Federal Security Director: The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced Thomas G. Russell has been selected as the FSD based at the Missoula International Airports. Russell will be responsible for overseeing screening at the Missoula, Glacier Park, Helena and Great Falls airports. Russell is a 30-year veteran of the Navy. Welcome Tom. ✈

Homeland Security Official Resigns: Asa Hutchinson, the undersecretary for border and transportation security at the Homeland Security Department has resigned effective March 1. This is the latest in a string of recent resignations including Secretary Tom Ridge and Deputy Secretary Adm. James Loy. President Bush has nominated Michael Chertoff, a federal judge and former head of the Justice Department's criminal division to be the new Homeland Security Secretary. Chertoff awaits confirmation and has received mixed reactions with supporters saying they look forward to working with him and critics expressing concern about his track record on civil liberties and his ability to manage one of the largest federal bureaucracies. ✈

Blains in Indonesia: A Billings contingent of air crews, helicopters and volunteers arrived in Indonesia in mid-January to assist in providing air support for relief organizations. Billings Flying Service, which is owned and operated by the Blain family, including Robert, Gary and A.J. Blain, all pilots, are working in Sumatra. Al Blain will be joining the crew. They expect to be there at least two months working for Air Serv International, a Virginia-based nonprofit organization that provides humanitarian airlift services. Air Serv is under contract with World Vision, a nonprofit Christian relief organization that is providing aid to tsunami victims. The Billings group arrived in Medan on Sumatra's eastern shore and traveled to the northern city of Banda Aceh, which they use as a base for flying food and essential supplies to some of the hardest hit areas that are no longer accessible by road. Best wishes, safe travels and thanks for all you do to the entire Blain family. ✈



Montana and the Sky

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Jim Lynch, Director

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Calendar

March 3-5, 2005 – Montana Aviation Conference, Butte. For further information phone (406) 444-2506.

March 10-12, 2005 – 2005 Idaho Aviation Festival. Boise Centre on the Grove. For further information visit their website at www.itd.idaho.gov/aero/AviationFestival or phone (208) 334-8775.

March 10-12, 2005 – 16th Annual International Women in Aviation Conference, Dallas, Texas. For further information call WAI at (386) 226-7996 or visit the web site at www.wai.org.

March 14-16, 2005 –Aeronautics Board Meeting. For further information phone (406) 444-2506.

May 21-22, 2005 – First Annual Fly2Fun Fly-In, Linn County Fair & Expo, Albany, Oregon, adjacent to Albany Airport. For further information email Fly2FunEvent@aol.com or call Gwen Graham at (503) 381-0997. Additional details of this event are on the organizations website at www.Fly2Fun.org.

May 27-29, 2005 - Benchmark Annual Work Session.

May 27-29, 2005 - Spotted Bear Annual Work Session.

June 5, 2005 – Airshow Malmstrom Air Force Base featuring the Thunderbirds.

June 17-19, 2005 - Meadow Creek Annual Work Session.

June 17-19, 2005 - Fort Peck Airport (37S). Frank Bass Fathers Day Pancake Breakfast. Friday: Cow Creek Fly-in Saturday: Boating, kayaking on Missouri River with Lewis and Clark History, Summer Theater BBQ evening. Sunday: Frank Bass Annual Fathers Day Pancake Breakfast. Contact Russ Dahl, Sec. MPA Valley Hangar, 406-228-4686, email: nemtl1150r@yahoo.com or visit their website at www.montanapilots.org.

July 15-17, 2005 - Schafer Meadows Annual Work Session.

July 30-31, 2005 – Mountain Madness 05 Airshow. Glacier International, Kalispell. Featured acts include The Blue Angels, Pietsch Brothers, Jim Franklin, Schocklee Jet Truck, Gordon Bowman Jones Announcing and some war birds.

Aviation Education



Dan Prill of Sand Coulee is showing the Centerville LEAP students how to plot an aviation course. Jeanne MacPherson, Margie Prill and Peggy Perry also took part in the aviation program a result of last year's aviation teacher workshop sponsored by Montana Aeronautics Division.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information call (406) 444-6331 or TTY (406) 444-7696.

**Happy
Valentines
DAY!**

Aeronautics Mechanics Seminar & IA Renewal

The Montana Aeronautics Division is pleased to announce the 2005 Mechanics Seminar & IA renewal will once again be held in conjunction with this year's Montana Aviation conference in Butte MT.

The dates for the conference are March 3-5, 2005. The Mechanics Seminar will be held on Friday March 4 and continue through Saturday March 5.

We will be offering six hours of training on Friday and a full eight hours of training on Saturday. This has worked out well in the past for those mechanics only wanting to attend on Saturday but still needing the training to update their IA for renewal. Mechanics attending this year's seminar will be required to register for the Aviation Conference. The registration fee will be \$55.00. This allows you to attend all concurrent sessions, morning and afternoon coffee breaks with snacks, Friday night dinner dance and the Saturday luncheon. Or if only attending the 8-hour Saturday session, a \$15.00 day pass may be obtained. Make plans now to attend, to discuss and learn the latest in aircraft maintenance.

TENTATIVE SPEAKERS: Teledyne Continental Motors – Loren Lemen; Garrett Aviation – Gil Ewan; Engine Components Inc.-Roger Fuchs; American Bonanza Society-Neil Pobanz; Precision Airmotive-Alan Jesmer; B&S Aircraft Parts & Accessories-Cliff Ives; Champion Aviation Products-Dick Johnson; Lawson Products-Len Tallo; Honeywell Chadwick-Jim Ramsey; Bell Helicopters-Jim Szymanski; Northwest Propeller-Dick Jacob; Steve Jones & Staff – Helena FSDO

VIP TFR Continued...

across my shoulders as I realized that, yes, this was serious - *deadly* serious. Secret Service trucks met the ground crews and fighters at the arm pad, and a few minutes later they thundered down the runway at full military afterburner. The cacophony of the airborne killing machines screaming up to FL200 gave audible accent to the mood surrounding the airport: we are not playing.

Forty minutes before the expected arrival, the Ground Freeze came into effect. *Nothing* moved on the airport. Nobody was allowed out on the ramps, nobody was allowed to leave the buildings (even to go to a parking lot, or as one person tried - to smoke a cigarette). No fuel trucks moved, no baggage cars rolled - nothing. The world stopped. The international airport stood still. We waited.

Over the radios came the call that sent chills down my spine: "Tower, Air Force One is descending through six thousand feet, inbound for full-stop." People crushed against the windows, craning their necks to get their first glimpse of the Big Blue Bird. A Secret Service suburban came screaming down the runway for a last-check, with the back window open and snipers facing outwards with rifles drawn. The helicopter hovered in the background.

And then she arrived: probably the most famous aircraft to ever grace the skies of earth: N28000, today carrying the call sign "Air Force One". 747's are always impressive on landing, but this machine simply exuded majesty: a queen bee arriving in a slow and graceful entrance. Air Force One touched down lightly 1,500 feet past the threshold, put on the thrust reversers, and carried the nose wheels high off the pavement until almost 6,000 feet of runway had passed - all the while kicking up the most massive cloud of dust I have ever seen. She taxied from the end with several Secret Service vehicles following less than a plane-length behind her (I cannot imagine the jet blast they experienced), and pulled up to the red-carpeted stairs awaiting at a remote ramp. The door opened, and I trained my binoculars there. After about two minutes, a man stepped out onto the steps and waved, and Air Force One reverted back into a "simple" VC-25. The President descended the steps, the motorcade blasted out onto the interstate (which had been closed for twenty minutes already), and within 30 seconds the Ground Freeze lifted. We all breathed again.

The departure of the President was much more anti-climactic. Once again, they announced the Ground Freeze. However, ten minutes later the call went out that "He's already on board!" We all looked out in disbelief, but sure enough, Air Force One was taxiing out for take-off. The Secret Service trucks again followed her all the way down the taxiway. As she charged down the runway they followed alongside on the taxiways for as long as they could. But she out-ran them all. Within seconds she was beyond reach, and then rose gracefully into the auburn sunset, banking eastward to Nebraska. Twenty minutes later, my captain summed it up when he asked Flight Service: "Since the President's gone, did the TFR go with him?"

Nope. We sat there with our passengers for another twenty minutes, but finally sneaked out after a few well-placed phone calls. While cruising home, our on-board traffic alert system suddenly pinged, and said that there was an aircraft one mile behind and 200 feet below us. It pinged again, and displayed that the aircraft had moved to our seven o'clock, was 1.3 miles behind us, and 200 feet above. My captain kept craning his neck to try to see what it was, but we never saw anything. We both shrugged it off as a probable system anomaly.

It wasn't until the next morning that I realized that this "anomaly" followed us for thirty miles.

CAP Receives Aerospace Education Excellence Award



The Civil Air Patrol Aerospace Education Excellence (AEX) Award was recently presented to the cadet program at Beartooth Composite Squadron in Billings for completing all of the AEX program requirements for 2004. Beartooth Composite Squadron's newly appointed Squadron Commander, 1 Lt. Martin Surdahl, received the AEX Award plaque on behalf of the squadron's cadets. We congratulate the Beartooth Composite Squadron on their outstanding achievements. (Photo by: Major Steven Heffel, CAP).

Conference Time Drawing Near!

With the conference less than a month away those of you that haven't pre-registered make sure and do so, remember if you pre-register you are eligible for a special drawing held during the conference. This year's conference is something you won't want to miss with the exciting line-up the committee has put together.

A spectacular spouse/guest tour has been planned for Friday. There will be a tour of the Copper King Mansion, lunch at the Thornton Building in historic uptown Butte, tours of the restored Speakeasy & Barber Shop and a tour of the World Museum of Mining. Interested persons can sign up for this tour at the conference. The price will be \$18.50 that includes lunch, bus and all tours.

Friday evening in true Butte style a fun evening is planned with entertainment by the one and only Jerry Cockrell, those of you that have attended past conferences remember Jerry's humorous Thursday evening sessions those of you that have never heard him you won't want to miss this, we are honored to have him return this year. Jerry will be followed by Butte's own Irish folk band "Dublin Gulch". The band has been playing together in various configurations since 1991. They specialize in Irish folk songs and Celtic tunes and take their name from one of Butte's many neighborhoods populated by expatriate Irish miners and their families. Many of their songs lend themselves to "painless" singing-along, which the band encourages. They accent their straightforward performance style with historical and cultural context and encourage audience participation. The "Tiernan Irish Dancers" will also be there to show off their skills accompanied with music by "Dublin Gulch". The Tiernan Dances consist of school-aged dancers ranging in age from three to seventeen, some of whom have been dancing for as many as nine years. Together "Dublin Gulch" and "The Tiernan Dancers" provide authentic Irish entertainment for their audiences. In addition to the entertainment dinner will include authentic Irish cuisine, Corned Beef & Cabbage, Irish Stew, Irish Soda Bread, Irish Desserts and more.

Other conference highlights include a general session on "What's Happening with U.S. & Canadian Customs", Ron Wagner of EAA AirVenture will conduct a general session on "Sport Pilot Overview" and there will also be a general session with a panel discussion on "Aviation Fuel vs. Auto Fuel".

Doug Murphy the Regional Administrator of the northwest Mountain Region will hold a Federal Aviation Administration open forum on Friday afternoon. The Montana Aeronautics Board will be on hand for a question and answer session late Friday afternoon.

A conference registration form is posted on our web site at www.mdt.state.mt.us/aeronautics/ or complete the registration form on page 6 of this month's newsletter. For further information phone (406) 444-2506 we look forward to welcoming you to Butte!

Roundup Airport New Fueling System



Roundup Airport has a new fueling system in operation. The new system includes a 12,000 gallon double walled above ground storage tank with credit card access. Phillips 100LL AvGas, at current price of \$2.504/gallon, is available through this system, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Roundup Airport also has a Courtesy Car available. The Roundup Airport welcomes all transient, business, and just for fun flights to use our new facilities.

Big Sky Announces Fleet Program

Big Sky Transportation Co., a wholly owned subsidiary of MAIR Holdings, Inc. announced that Big Sky Airlines will begin a fleet modernization program through the introduction of Beechcraft B1900D aircraft. Big Sky expects to begin flying the B1900D aircraft during March 2005. The current fleet of Fairchild Metro aircraft will be retired during the remainder of 2005.

Big Sky Airlines will ease 10 B1900D aircraft from Mesa Airlines, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Mesa Air Group, Inc. of Phoenix, Arizona. The aircraft are currently operated by its subsidiary, Air Midwest, Inc. The true stand-up-and-walk-through cabin of the Beech 1900D offers 19 passengers exceptional head, shoulder and leg room – not to mention a window and aisle seat wrapped into one. And because it's a turboprop, the 1900D provides reliable, comfortable and efficient service.

"Big Sky is looking forward to the benefits that our customers will experience the first time they ride on one of our B1900D aircraft," said Craig Denney, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. "This is an exciting time for Big Sky and the communities we serve. We plan to initiate service between Sheridan, Wyoming and both Denver and Billings, on April 3, 2005 with B1900D aircraft." The Sheridan, Wyoming route was recently awarded to Big Sky under the U.S. Department of Transportation's Essential Air Service Program.



Thursday Kick-off Luncheon
Sarah Rhodes "A Montanan's Experiences as a Carrier Pilot"



Register now....

Montana Aviation Conference
March 3-5, 2005
Copper King Lodge, Butte



Concurrent Sessions with Wayne Handley
"Recognition & Recovery from Unusual Attitudes"



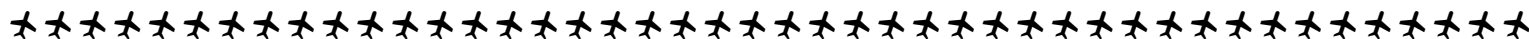
Friday Dinner/Dance
Jerry Cockrell "Aviation Humorist"



Friday Awards Luncheon
Dan Hargrove "Experiences flying the Vice President, First Lady, President's Cabinet & Congress"



Saturday Banquet
Jim Tucker "Attempted Hijacking FedEx 705"



MONTANA AVIATION CONFERENCE – March 3-5, 2005

Mail to:
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 (406) 444-2506

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Your Organization Affiliation:
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PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING RESERVATIONS
 NOTE: **Meal tickets must be purchased 48 hours in advance.**

TAKEOFF TO LANDING PACKAGE
(INCLUDES REGS. & ALL MEALS)

_____	@ \$105/PERSON	\$ _____
_____	@ \$200/PERSON/SPOUSE	\$ _____
-OR-	REG. FEE _____ @ \$55/PERSON	\$ _____
	_____ @ \$100/FAMILY	\$ _____
	Thursday Luncheon _____ @ \$15	\$ _____
	Friday Luncheon _____ @ \$15	\$ _____
	**Friday Dinner/Dance _____ @ FREE	\$ FREE
	**Saturday Luncheon _____ @ FREE	\$ FREE
	Saturday Banquet _____ @ \$25	\$ _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
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TOTAL: \$ _____

****PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU WILL ATTEND THE FREE FRIDAY DINNER/DANCE AND FREE SATURDAY LUNCHEON WITH NUMBER OF TICKETS REQUIRED- PERSON/SPOUSE AND FAMILY RATE INCLUDES 2 DINNER/DANCE & 2 SATURDAY LUNCH TICKETS - ADDITIONAL TICKETS MAY BE PURCHASED - \$25.00 DINNER/DANCE AND \$15.00 SATURDAY LUNCHEON. TO ASSURE ADEQUATE MEAL COUNT IF NO INDICATION IS MADE AS TO NUMBER OF TICKETS REQUIRED NO TICKETS WILL BE RESERVED.**

Surratt Memorial Winter Survival Clinic

The Surratt Memorial Winter Survival was a big hit this year with a waiting list for the overnight portion of the clinic. Thanks to, Debbi (Surratt) Meyers for her support of this important training program, Skip Stoffel and Ralph Wilfong of Emergency Response International for their expert leadership to the participants in both the 16-hour ground training and our overnight field session. Thank you, also, to the Army National Guard for the use of the facilities, to Abe Grosefield for the use of his land for the overnight session at the Lincoln Airport and to Rose at Ponder' Roses in Lincoln for a great Sunday morning breakfast.

As usual, the participants are a great part of what make the training successful. This year Cathy Murphy of Wolf Creek, made awesome survival cookies for the evening and day training. Tom Epel of Pony, a primitive survival expert, shared with us some fire building skills. Many of the participants are returning winter survivalist adding to their book of survival knowledge. This year's mild weather brought even more interest to Sunday's parade of homes /survival shelters. What a worthwhile program!

Emergency Response International put together a minimum survival kit containing six essential categories, shelter, fire, signaling and lighting, medical and tools. We at Montana Aeronautics Division hope there is a survival kit in each of your airplanes that is in quick access to you and your passengers.



Tim Moran of Rollins and Lee Lytton of Polson stayed comfortable in their shelter constructed of a tarp, log beams and bows.



Brett McCrumb a building contractor from Polson had a bit of pressure building his shelter.



Dylan, Stefan and Olin McCrumb watch Tom Epel's bow demonstration, "to build a fire".



On Sunday after the parade of homes, the survivalists try their hand at signaling.

AMAA Holds Annual Convention

By: Mike Biggerstaff, Vice President, AMAA

The Association of Montana Aerial Applicators (AMAA) had their annual convention and business meeting on January 24 & 25, 2005 in Great Falls. On the 25th both AMAA and Montana Aviation Trades Association (MATA) shared a Professional Aerial Applicators Support System (PAASS) program presented by the National Agricultural Aviation Association. This program is to help aerial applicators take the human factor out of the accident equation. PAASS helps to make the AG Aviation industry safer for the pilots, growers and the environment.

Shelly Peterson has been AMAA's executive secretary for the past six years. She has worked for Corporate Air for the past fifteen years and because of a larger workload, she decided to step down as AMAA's secretary. Shelly grew up around AG Aviation; she is the daughter of Linda Blain and the late Monte Blain. Linda and her son Wade operate Joliet Flying Service in Joliet, Montana. We will miss Shelly and thank her for all her hard work and extra effort on behalf of the AG Aviation industry.

AMAA's new executive secretary is Colleen Campbell. Colleen and her husband Mike Campbell own and operate Campbell Aviation Inc. out of Dutton, MT. She can be reached at (406) 476-3332.



Pictured at the AMAA Convention closing banquet are (l-r) Courtney & Dana Ness and Shelly Peterson. Following dinner all were treated to entertainment by a very talented group of young fiddlers from the Great Falls area.

Twenty-nine hundred copies of this public document were produced at an estimated cost of 39 cents each, for a total cost of \$1,131. This includes \$200 for production, \$750 for postage and \$181 for printing.



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